

Preparing for Your Chemotherapy Treatment



Princess Margaret

For patients receiving chemotherapy at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

Read this resource to learn about:

- What to expect during your appointments
- Hospital and community resources, including classes, support groups and driving services
- Drug coverage options

Preparing for Your Treatment

Attend the Chemotherapy Introduction session for patients and families to know more about what to expect and how to manage side effects. For more information about this session, check your appointment schedule or view the Patient & Survivorship Education Calendar of Events available:



- Online at www.theprincessmargaret.ca, scroll down to “Classes & Activities” and click on “See calendar ”.
- at the Patient & Family Library on the main floor of Princess Margaret



- Attend a class in your language. You can book a medical interpreter for this class at no cost to you. To book, please call 416-581-8604. Five weekdays advance notice is required.

Your Appointments

Clinic Visit with Your Doctor

You will have appointments with your doctor while receiving chemotherapy. How often you see your doctor depends on many things, including the type of chemotherapy you are getting. During these appointments, you will be examined by your doctor, given any prescriptions you may need and given a schedule of appointments for treatment and other tests, if needed. This is the time to let your doctor or nurse know how you are feeling, explain any side effects you have, and ask questions.

Blood Tests

If you are not sure if you need a blood test, ask your clinic nurse or doctor.

If you do need a blood test:

- You need to have your blood work done 1 – 2 days before your chemo. This is to make sure it is safe for you to have your chemo.
- Check your appointment itinerary to know when you should have your blood work done.
- You can have your blood work done at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre's Blood Lab on the main floor next to the Outpatient Pharmacy.
- You may be able to have your blood work done at a blood lab close to your home. Speak with your healthcare team for more information.
- Read the pamphlet "Know about your blood work" for more information about having your blood work done before your chemo treatment.

Chemotherapy Treatment

How will my chemotherapy treatment be scheduled?

You will be given an appointment for your chemotherapy treatment by your nurse or doctor at your clinic visit. Please do your best to get to your chemotherapy appointment on time. If you are running late for your appointment, please call the Chemotherapy Reception Desk (see contact information on page 11).

How long will my chemotherapy treatment appointment be?

Chemotherapy treatments can last from 15 minutes to several hours. This depends on the type and amount of chemotherapy you are getting. Your nurse will explain your treatment time to you. In general, prepare to spend the day at the hospital.

Arriving before your chemotherapy appointment time does not mean that you will start your treatment earlier. We do our best to stay on time, but delays can happen at the blood lab, at pharmacy where the chemotherapy is prepared, or at the chemotherapy unit. We apologize for any delays in advance.

What should I bring with me to my appointment?

- **Your government issued Health Card** – Check that the information on your hospital card is up to date, and tell the receptionist if there are any changes to your information.
- **Medications** – For your first treatment, bring in all medications that you are taking, including any alternative or herbal medications. After your first treatment, you can bring only the medications you may need to take while you are at the hospital, such as pain or anti-nausea medications.

You can also bring:

- **One family member or friend** – Please bring only 1 visitor with you. The Chemotherapy treatment areas are small. Children under 12 years old are not allowed on the unit. The Magic Castle on the main floor at the Princess Margaret provides a free childcare service if needed.
- **Food** – You may bring a light snack or food to the unit. Juice, cookies, and fresh ice water are available in each unit for you. Microwaves are available for you to use, but please do not bring microwave popcorn or other strong smelling foods because strong smells can make other patients nauseous.

What should I do when I arrive at the Chemotherapy Unit for my appointment?

When you arrive at the Chemotherapy Unit, go to the reception desk. Stay in the waiting room until the receptionist calls you to the desk and gives you a hospital ID bracelet.

When you check in, tell the receptionist if you have or have had any symptoms related to your treatment. You may need to be seen by a nurse before starting your treatment.

Symptoms may include:

- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever
- chills
- mouth sores

If you were prescribed medications to take before you start your chemotherapy, ask at reception what time you should take them. This will help you make sure you take the medications at the right time based on when a treatment spot is ready for you.

Can I leave the Chemotherapy Unit while I wait for my appointment?

Once you have your hospital ID bracelet, you will receive a pager. You will be paged by reception once your medicine is ready and a treatment spot is available. After you are paged, please return to the reception area to find out which treatment area you need to go to. Pagers do not work outside of the hospital, so if you leave the building, you may miss your page.

What is available to me while I wait for my appointment?

- **Resource Centre** - Computers with internet are available for patients and families to use on the 4th floor and in clinic waiting rooms in the hospital. You can also browse through a collection of health information pamphlets on many topics that can help you through your cancer journey. More materials are available in the Patient & Family Library located on the main floor in the atrium. See page 7 for more information about the library.
- **Wireless Internet** – Wireless internet is available to patients and visitors with their own laptop computers. Ask the receptionist for instructions on how to connect to the internet.
- **Portable DVD Players and DVDs** – Portable DVD players and a small number of DVDs are available for you to borrow. Please bring your own headphones. Ask your nurse if you would like to borrow a DVD player.
- **Microwaves** – Microwaves are available for patients and families to use. Please do not bring microwave popcorn or other strong smelling foods because strong smells can make other patients nauseous.
- **Music in the Atrium** – There is live music in the atrium on the main floor every Wednesday at 12:00 p.m.

Note: You may use your cell phone in the waiting and treatment areas, but be considerate of other patients and visitors. Please limit the use of your cell phone in the treatment areas and turn your ringer to vibrate. Visitors are asked to leave the treatment area to use their cell phones.

Resources and services you may find helpful while receiving your chemotherapy treatment

This section has information about services both at and outside the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre that may be useful to you and your family while you are receiving chemotherapy.

This includes:

- Driving services
- Places to stay close to the Princess Margaret Cancer Center
- Information and support
- Wigs and accessories
- Drug coverage

Driving Services

The “Driving Services to Medical Appointments” pamphlet has more information about other driving services, both free and for a fee. Find a copy of the pamphlet at:

- www.theprincessmargaret.ca ; Click on “Patients & Families” then scroll down to search the Patient and Family Library
- The Princess Margaret Patient and Family Library on the main floor.

Places to stay close to the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

- **The Princess Margaret Lodge**
545 Jarvis Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2H8
416-413-7417 www.pmhlodge.org

A place to stay for out of town patients receiving active treatment at the Princess Margaret. The lodge provides accommodation at reasonable rates for patients. Please call for more information.

- **Other Places to Stay**
For a list of rates and places to stay close to Princess Margaret, stop by the Patient and Family Library on the main floor and ask for the Accommodations List.

Information and support

The Patient and Family Library.

Main floor atrium, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre
416 946 4501 ext. 5383

The Patient and Family Library offers computer stations, books, brochures, DVDs, audio books, electronic books and CDs with reliable information about cancer, cancer treatment and care, support organizations and services and much more. Trained staff and volunteers can help with your questions and help you to find information and resources. Enjoy the library's comfortable seating area to read and take notes or just to sit and relax.

You can take or sign out pamphlets and books on topics like:

- different types of cancer
- patient experiences
- nutrition
- managing side effects
- income support
- support groups and community organizations in your community

Classes and Events for Patients and Families

The Princess Margaret offers many classes for patients and families. These classes can help prepare you for treatment, manage side effects, and cope with your diagnosis. For more information, check the Patient & Survivorship Education Calendar of Events at:

- The Patient & Family Library on the main floor of Princess Margaret
- www.theprincessmargaret.ca
Scroll down to “Classes & Activities”. Click on “See calendar”. To view a list of classes, click on “View List” at the top right corner of the calendar.



Attend a class in your language. You can book a medical interpreter for this class at no cost to you. For more information and to book, please call 416-581-8604. Five weekdays advance notice is required.

- **Wellspring**
1-877-499-9904
www.wellspring.ca

Wellspring is a network of community-based centres that offer programs providing support, coping skills, and education to cancer patients and their families. Wellspring has many locations across Canada, call or check the website for locations.

- **Gilda’s Club**
24 Cecil Street, Toronto, ON M5T 1N2
416-214-9898
www.gildasclubtoronto.org

Gilda’s Club Greater Toronto is a place where men, women, teens and children with cancer - along with their family and friends--can join others for social and emotional support in a residential, home-like setting. Call or visit the website to get information on the support groups, education classes, lectures, art programs, and children and teen programs.

Wigs and accessories

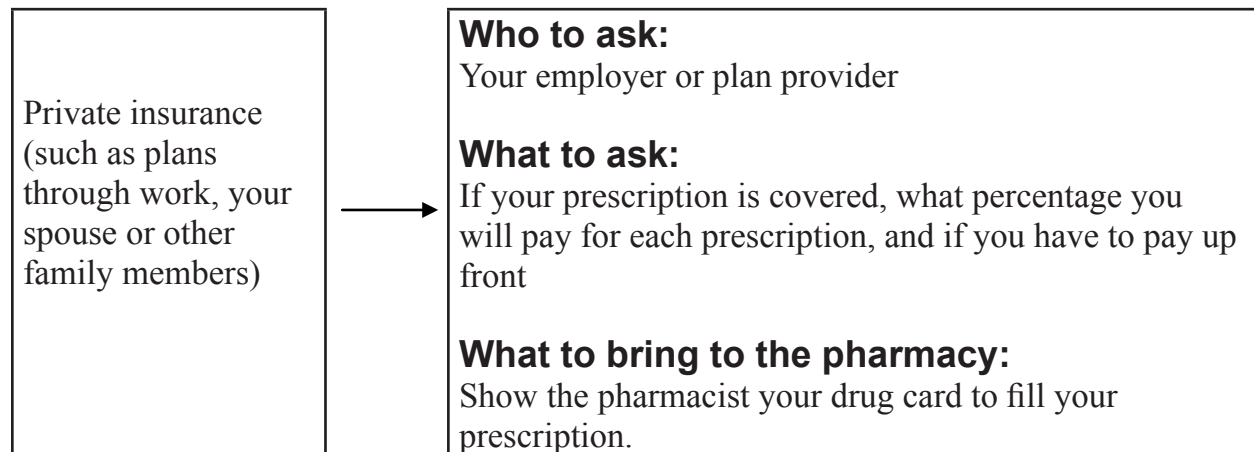
- **The Wig Salon and Accessories Boutique**

3rd floor, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre
416-946-6596

The Wig Salon and Accessories Boutique sells hats, wigs, head scarves, turbans and caps. The boutique also sells special purses for women who have lymphedema. They also host several workshops including “Look Good Feel Better” program which is a two hour workshop where women can learn to manage treatment side effects that affect appearance.

Drug Coverage

It is important to know what kind of drug coverage you have as early as possible. Knowing your drug coverage options can help you plan ahead and prevent delays in your treatment. Use the flow chart below to find out what you need to know.



A valid Drug Card from Ontario Works, Home care, or Ontario Disability Support Program

Who to ask:

A medication reimbursement specialist, social worker or pharmacist

What to ask:

If your prescription is covered, how the plan pays the prescription cost and what you will pay for each prescription

What to bring to the pharmacy:

Show the pharmacist your valid drug card to fill your prescription.

No insurance at all

Who to ask:

A medication reimbursement specialist, social worker or pharmacist

What to ask:

How to apply to the Trillium Drug Program, the details of coverage and what you will pay for each prescription

What to bring to the pharmacy:

Once you are approved, show the pharmacist your OHIP card to fill your prescription.

Coverage as a senior (65 years old or older)

Who to ask:

A pharmacist

What to ask:

When you qualify for coverage, if your prescription is covered, and what you will pay for each prescription

What to bring to the pharmacy:

Show the pharmacist your OHIP card to fill your prescription.

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Resources

A social worker or medication reimbursement specialist can help you understand your drug coverage options. A medication reimbursement specialist is a drug coverage expert at the Princess Margaret who can help you understand how your coverage works and what options you may have. You can call to book an appointment with a medication reimbursement specialist or a social worker if you need:

- help figuring out how your coverage works
- advice on how to move forward with planning
- more information about patient assistance programs

Medication Reimbursement Specialists (by appointment only)
4th Floor, Room 104
416-946-4501 Ext. 5129 or Ext. 4076

Social Workers (by appointment only)
Psychosocial Oncology & Palliative Care. 16th Floor, Room 718
416-946-4525

You can also visit the Patient and Family Library on the main floor for a more detailed pamphlet about your drug coverage options.

- **Community Resources**

Wellspring Money Matters Resource Centre (by appointment only)
2 Adelaide Street West, Suite 302. Toronto, Ontario. M5H 1L6
416-961-1928

The Money Matters Resource Centre has information on government and community income programs, resources and support to help cancer patients and their families cope with the financial difficulty that can come with a cancer diagnosis.

Important Telephone Numbers

If you are calling to ask about a patient or to let us know that you are running late for your appointment, call:

Chemotherapy Reception Desk (Monday to Friday 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)

Telephone: 416-946-4501 ext. 5118

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please speak to any of the Chemotherapy Unit staff,
or ask to talk to the Coordinator or Manager of the unit.



Do you need an interpreter? Please tell your healthcare provider or phone operator to contact UHN Interpretation and Translation Services. Interpretation is provided free of charge to UHN patients.